# THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY 2021 YOUNG PEOPLE'S RETREAT

#### SHEPHERDING ONE ANOTHER BY ESTABLISHING AND CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

Message One

#### Caring for the Building Up of God's House to Receive the Blessing

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7-9; Eph. 3:8-11; 2 Cor. 4:7; Rom. 9:21-23; 1 Thes. 5:23

# I. Caring for God's need and caring for the building up of God's house to receive the blessing:

- A. According to the divine economy of the Bible, if we desire to receive, we need to give; if we water others, we ourselves will be watered, and if we desire to grow in life, we need to help others to grow—Prov. 11:25; 2 Cor. 9:6-10.
- B. It is because we are too self-centered in our prayer that the Lord needs to teach us a lesson; if we water others, we will be watered, and if we care for others, we will be cared for—Hag. 1:2-11.

# II. The necessity of warfare in building—Exo. 7:4; 2 Sam. 8:10-11; 1 Chron. 22:14; Neh. 4:16-17; Matt. 16:18:

- A. The three enemies today:
  - 1. The deadness of Sardis—to be conquered in the Body life by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God and by being transformed from the fashion of this age by the renewing of our mind—Rev. 3:1-2; Rom. 12:1-2.
  - 2. The lukewarmness of Laodicea—to be conquered by the seeking of the riches of Christ by not being slothful in zeal and by being burning in spirit, serving the Lord—Rev. 3:14-18, 20; Rom. 12:11.
  - 3. The barrenness of the degenerating believers—to be conquered in desperation by fearing to be cut off from the enjoyment of Christ's supply in this age and by caring for the discipline in the coming age—John 15:2a; Matt. 25:24-30.
- B. For the spiritual warfare we need the humanity of Jesus-Gen. 3:15; Matt. 4:1-11:
  - 1. To fight the battle against the enemy, we must exercise the humanity of Jesus in our daily walk; our family life needs the humanity of Jesus.
  - 2. Satan's main target today is the young people.
  - 3. Satan is so subtle today; he is doing whatever he can to damage the mentality of man—Rom. 1:28; 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 6:16.
  - 4. The issue of this kind of mental damage is of three categories—fornication, suicide, and mental illness—1 Cor. 6:18; Heb. 13:4; 2 Tim. 1:7.
  - We must keep our mind healthy and our body in sanctification; by ourselves we cannot be such a person, but [Jesus] is such a person in us, and His humanity is such a proper humanity for the spiritual warfare—1 Cor. 6:15-16, 19-20; 1 Thes. 4:4

# III. The way to be vitalized:

- A. To be stirred up in the first love for the Lord through repenting prayers—Rev. 2:4-5.
- B. To make a thorough confession to the Lord–1 John 1:7, 9.
- C. To have close, intimate, and thorough fellowship with the Lord and with the seeking saints—Dan. 1:6.
- D. To reconsecrate yourself to the Lord:
  - 1. Everyone who desires to be built up must be a consecrated person and must also help others to consecrate themselves.
  - 2. In order for God to work on us, we must consecrate ourselves, hand ourselves over to Him.
  - 3. If a brother consecrated himself in a general way in the past, he now needs to be definite and thorough to present his members according to Romans 6, presenting his eyes, mouth, hands, and heart; then he must consecrate his body according to chapter 12—Rom. 6:13; 12:1, 2, 11.
  - 4. Every renewed consecration will refresh our spiritual condition.
- E. To be the overcomers in the church life—Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21.

# SCRIPTURE READING

# John 2:17

His disciples remembered that it was written, "The zeal of Your house shall devour Me."

# 2 Corinthians 11:28

Apart from the things which have not been mentioned, there is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches.

# 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.

# Haggai 1:2-11

- 2 Thus says Jehovah of hosts, saying, This people says, The time has not come, the time for the house of Jehovah to be built.
- 3 Then the word of Jehovah came through Haggai the prophet, saying,
- 4 Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled-up houses, while this house lies waste?
- 5 Now therefore thus says Jehovah of hosts, Consider your ways.

- 6 You have sown much, but you bring in little; you eat, but there is no satisfaction; you drink, but there is no being filled with drink; you dress yourselves, but there is no warmth in doing so; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put them into a bag with holes.
- 7 Thus says Jehovah of hosts, Consider your ways.
- 8 Go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it and will be glorified, says Jehovah.
- 9 You looked for much, and yet it amounted to little; and when you brought it home, I blew on it. Why? declares Jehovah of hosts. Because of My house that lies waste while you each run to your own house.
- 10 Therefore over you the heavens withhold their dew, and the earth withholds its yield.
- 11 Indeed I called for a drought upon the land and upon the mountains and upon the grain and upon the new wine and upon the fresh oil and upon that which the ground brings forth and upon man and upon beast and upon all the toil of the hands.

# John 21:1-19

- 1 After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. And He manifested Himself in this way:
- 2 Simon Peter and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee and the sons of Zebedee and two others of His disciples were there together.
- 3 Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing. They said to him, We also are coming with you. They went forth and got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.
- 4 Now as soon as the morning broke, Jesus stood on the shore; however the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.
- 5 Then Jesus said to them, Little children, you do not have any fish to eat, do you? They answered Him, No.
- 6 And He said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some. They cast therefore, and they were no longer able to haul it in because of the abundance of fish.
- 7 Then that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord! Therefore when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment around himself, for he was naked; and he threw himself into the sea.
- 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits away, dragging the net of fish.
- 9 Then when they got out onto the land, they saw a fire of coals laid there, and fish lying on it and bread.
- 10 Jesus said to them, Bring some of the fish that you have just now caught.
- 11 Simon Peter therefore went up and hauled the net to the land full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and though there were so many, the net was not torn.
- 12 Jesus said to them, Come and have breakfast. But none of the disciples dared to inquire of Him, Who are you? knowing that it was the Lord.
- 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise.

- 14 This was now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples after He had been raised from the dead.
- 15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- 16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- 17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- 18 Truly, truly, I say to you, When you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.
- 19 Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, Follow Me.

#### SHEPHERDING ONE ANOTHER BY ESTABLISHING AND CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

#### Message Two

#### Living in Fellowship with God—Fighting for the Brother and a Glorious Intercession

Scripture Reading: Gen. 14:1-24; 18:16-33; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30; Luke 17:31-32; Gen. 19:15-17, 26-29

# I. Lot separated himself from Abraham and was now living in Sodom, which was defeated by four kings; he was taken captive along with his possessions—Gen. 14:1-24:

- A. Lot suffered two defeats; firstly being defeated by separating himself from the protection of the older generation—Abraham, and living in Sodom; then he was defeated by the four kings and taken captive—14:11-12:
  - 1. God's goal and God's mark is with the called ones; we should never separate ourselves from them.
  - 2. Lot, as one of the people of God, surely knew Sodom was an evil city; he should have stayed away from Sodom and not walked towards it.
- B. When Abraham heard of the capture of Lot he made a strong decision to fight for Lot-14:13-17:
  - 1. Abraham decided to take his three hundred eighteen men and fight against the four kings and their armies—14:14.
  - 2. Abraham defeated the four kings and brought Lot and the captives back because he had learned the basic lesson that everything is in the hands of the sovereign God.
  - 3. Although his capture was a warning to Lot, he still returned to Sodom after he was released by Abraham.
- C. Melchisedec, a priest of the Most High God came to meet Abraham as he returned from the battle and ministered bread and wine to nourish the victor—14:18-20.
- D. Abraham's victory stopped all the fighting and strife and brought in genuine peace—14:21-24.
- II. The glorious intercession that Abraham made before God was not a prayer from man on earth to God in heaven; it was a human, intimate conversation between two friends, an intimate talk according to the unveiling of God's heart's desire—Gen. 18:17-33; 1 Tim. 2:1, 8:
  - A. When God and the two angels were about to leave, Abraham did not bid them goodbye but conducted them on their way—Gen. 18:16.
  - B. Abraham remained in the presence of God, lingering there, still standing before Jehovah and God opened His heart to Abraham—v. 22:
    - 1. God revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom, because He was seeking an intercessor—Gen. 18:17-22; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30.
    - 2. While God intended to destroy Sodom, His heart was concerned for Lot, who was dwelling in Sodom—Gen. 13:12; 14:12; 19:1.

- 3. God wanted to save Lot in order to protect Christ's genealogy through Ruth, a Moabitess and a descendant of Lot—v. 37; Ruth 1:4; Matt. 1:5.
- C. Thus, in His intimate fellowship with Abraham, in a mysterious way, without mentioning Lot's name, God revealed His heart's desire; Abraham's purpose in standing before Jehovah was to intercede for Lot—Gen. 18:22:
  - 1. God could not hide His intention to destroy Sodom from Abraham—v. 17.
  - 2. These two friends spoke about Lot but neither mentioned him by name; rather they spoke about Sodom showing that we should intercede for God's people who have drifted into the world.
  - 3. "Will you indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?"—v. 23.
- D. Abraham challenged God: "Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked....Shall not the Judge of all the earth do justly?"—v. 25:
  - 1. Abraham asked if God would destroy Sodom if there were fifty righteous ones, then forty-five, then finally reaching the bottom number of ten—vv. 29-32.
  - Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished His speaking with Abraham—v. 33.
  - 3. Abraham's intercession was very effective for "God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out from the middle of the overthrow..."–19:29.
  - 4. "Remember Lot's wife" is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers—Luke 17:31-32; Gen. 19:15-17, 26.
  - 5. God was revealed to Abraham as the God in His human friendship so that He might gain him to be His intercessor for the rescue of His backslidden believer, for the bringing forth of Christ, and for the destruction of the works of the devil in His chosen people—Gen. 18:1-33.
  - 6. Abraham was very concerned for Lot and was still with God's heart as he woke up early in the morning and looked at the city; Abraham's intercession was very effective for God sent Lot out from the middle of the overthrow—19:27-29.

# **SCRIPTURE READING:**

# Genesis 14:1-24

- 1 And in the days of Amraphel the king of Shinar, Arioch the king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and Tidal the king of Goiim,
- 2 These kings made war with Bera the king of Sodom and with Birsha the king of Gomorrah, Shinab the king of Admah, and Shemeber the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).
- 3 All these joined together in the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).
- 4 Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.
- 5 And in the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and struck the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shavehkiriathaim
- 6 And the Horites in Mount Seir as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness.
- 7 And they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and struck all the country of the Amalekites and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazazon-tamar.

- 8 And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went forth and set the battle in array against them in the valley of Siddim,
- 9 Against Chedorlaomer the king of Elam and Tidal the king of Goiim and Amraphel the king of Shinar and Arioch the king of Ellasar, four kings against the five.
- 10 Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there; but those who survived fled to the hill country.
- 11 And they took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food and went away.
- 12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, and his possessions and departed, for he was dwelling in Sodom.
- 13 And one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was dwelling by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner; and these were allies of Abram.
- 14 And when Abram heard that his brother had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred eighteen of them, and pursued as far as Dan.
- 15 And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and struck them and pursued them to Hobah, which is north of Damascus.
- 16 And he brought back all the possessions and also brought back Lot his brother and his possessions as well as the women and the people.
- 17 And after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).
- 18 And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine. Now he was priest of God the Most High.
- 19 And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of God the Most High, / Possessor of heaven and earth;
- 20 And blessed be God the Most High, / Who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And Abram gave him a tenth of all.
- 21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the people, and take the possessions for yourself.
- 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand to Jehovah, God the Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth,
- 23 That I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you say, I have made Abram rich;
- 24 Except only that which the young men have eaten and the portion of the men who went with me Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

# Genesis 18:16-33

- 16 And the men rose up from there and looked down upon Sodom. And Abraham walked with them to send them away.
- 17 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
- 18 Since Abraham will indeed become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him?
- 19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Jehovah by doing righteousness and justice, that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken concerning him.

- 20 And Jehovah said, The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah, how great it is; and their sin, how very heavy it is!
- 21 I shall go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.
- 22 And the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before Jehovah.
- 23 And Abraham came near and said, Will You indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?
- 24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?
- 25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked. Far be it from You! Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?
- 26 And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sake.
- 27 And Abraham answered and said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes.
- 28 Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.
- 29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, Suppose forty are found there? And He said, I will not do it, because of the forty.
- 30 And he said, Oh may the Lord not be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there? And He said, I will not do it if I find thirty there.
- 31 And he said, Now behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the twenty.
- 32 And he said, Oh let the Lord not be angry if I speak yet once more. Suppose ten are found there? And He said, I will not destroy it, because of the ten.
- 33 And Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

# 1 Timothy 2:1, 8

- 1 I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men;
- 8 I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and reasoning;

# Isaiah 59:16

And He saw that there was no man, / And He was appalled that there was no intercessor. / Therefore His arm accomplished salvation for Him, / And His righteousness sustained Him.

# Ezek. 22:30

And I sought a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the breach before Me for the sake of the land so that I would not destroy it, but I found no one.

#### Luke 17:31-32

- 31 In that day, he who will be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind.
- 32 Remember Lot's wife.

## Genesis 19:15-17, 26-29

- 15 And when the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, Rise up; take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be destroyed in the iniquity of the city.
- 16 But he lingered; so the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hand of his two daughters, Jehovah being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.
- 17 And when they had brought them outside, He said, Escape for your life. Do not look behind you, neither stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the hills, lest you be destroyed.
- 26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.
- 27 And Abraham rose up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before Jehovah.
- 28 And he looked down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and upon all the land of the plain. And as he looked, there it was: the smoke of the land was going up like the smoke of a furnace.
- 29 And when God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out from the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities among which Lot dwelt.

#### SHEPHERDING ONE ANOTHER BY ESTABLISHING AND CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

#### Message Three

#### **Love Prevails**

#### Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 13:1-13

- I. God is love; we love because He first loved us-1 John 4:8, 19.
- II. God's predestination of us unto the divine sonship was motivated by the divine love—Eph. 1:4-5.
- III. God's giving of His only begotten Son to us that we may be saved from perdition judicially through His death and have the eternal life organically in His resurrection was motivated by the divine love—John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10.
- IV. God's love is the source of the grace of Christ dispensed to us through the fellowship of the Spirit-2 Cor. 13:14.
- V. God's love motivates us, His children, to love our enemies that we may be perfect as He is; He loves the fallen human race, who became His enemies, by causing His sun (signifying Christ) to rise on the evil and the good indiscriminately and sending rain (signifying the Spirit) on the just and the unjust equally; thus, we may become the sons of the heavenly Father who are sanctified from the tax collectors and the Gentiles—Matt. 5:43-48.
- VI. Love builds up-1 Cor. 8:1b.
- VII. Love is not jealous, is not provoked, does not take account of evil, covers all things, endures all things, never falls away, and is the greatest—13:4-8, 13.
- VIII. Love is the conclusion of all spiritual virtues and the factor of fruit-bearing that supplies us bountifully with the rich entrance into the kingdom of Christ—2 Pet. 1:5-11.
  - IX. The Body of Christ builds itself up in love-Eph. 4:16.
  - X. The spirit that God gives us is of love; hence, it is of power and of sobermindedness-2 Tim. 1:7.
  - XI. He who does not love abides in death-1 John 3:14b.
- XII. Pursue love while you desire spiritual gifts—1 Cor. 14:1.
- XIII. To overcome the degradation of the church we need to pursue love with those who seek the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.
- XIV. Loving one another is a sign that we belong to Christ–John 13:34-35.
- XV. The love of God makes us more than conquerors over our circumstantial situations—Rom. 8:35-39.
- XVI. Love is the most excellent way–1 Cor. 12:31b.

#### **SCRIPTURE READING:**

#### 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

- 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
- 2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
- 3 And if I dole out all my possessions to feed others, and if I deliver up my body that I may boast, but do not have love, I profit nothing.
- 4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
- 5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil;
- 6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
- 7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 8 Love never falls away. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless.
- 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;
- 10 But when that which is complete comes, that which is in part will be rendered useless.
- 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; since I have become a man, I have done away with childish things.
- 12 For now we see in a mirror obscurely, but at that time face to face; now I know in part, but at that time I will fully know even as also I was fully known.
- 13 Now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

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#### Message Four

## The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 4:15; Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:28-29; 1 Thes. 2:7-12; 1 John 5:16

# I. Our Lord shepherds us mainly by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our real person—Isa. 40:11; John 10:11, 14; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:17:

- A. Christ takes care of us in a tender, all-inclusive way; this kind of shepherding is an inward, intrinsic, organic comforting—John 14:16, 26; cf. 2 Cor. 1:3-4.
- B. Our soul is the part of our being that needs the most shepherding; the most troublesome part of our person is our soul—Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:1-4.
- C. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds—cf. Isa. 61:1.
- D. In His heavenly ministry Christ is shepherding people, and we need to cooperate with Him by shepherding people; this is the apostolic ministry in cooperation with Christ's heavenly ministry:
  - 1. The main thing in [John 21] is the Lord Jesus spending time to shepherd Peter.
  - 2. After restoring Peter's love toward Him, the Lord Jesus charged him, saying, "Feed My lambs," "Shepherd My sheep," and "Feed My sheep"—John 21:15-17.
- E. As the Chief Shepherd, [the Lord Jesus] must have a flock of shepherds under Him; we are not just flocks of sheep but flocks of shepherds—Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2, 4.

# II. Shepherding people according to the Lord's heart:

- A. Love covering all transgressions—Prov. 10:12; James 5:19-20; 1 Pet. 4:8.
- B. God loving the world for sinners to have eternal life, that is, to become the New Jerusalem–John 3:16; 4:14.
- C. The Lord not coming to call the righteous but sinners—Matt. 9:10-13; 1 Tim. 1:15.
- D. Having a spirit to go to tax collectors and sinners—Luke 7:34-50.
- E. Having the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God and the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ—Luke 15:1-32:
- F. We need to have this kind of love and go to tell all the dormant ones who think that the church condemns them that the church does not condemn anyone.
- G. Being under the Lord's discipling to have no trust in ourselves—Luke 22:31-34.

# III. Every member in the church having the normal ability to shepherd people:

- A. By our spiritual birth every member in the church has the gift of shepherding; even someone who has been saved for only a few days can learn to shepherd.
- B. A normal church is not merely one in which the members stand to speak something in the meetings—this is only a small part of our service; the main part of the service in the church is a daily gospel life and shepherding.

- C. "For this purpose, the Lord needs even the teenagers. I hope that the older teenagers will pick up the burden to care for those in junior high school. According to my observation, we have many ten-year-old, eleven-year-old, and twelve-year-old sisters, but there are no teenage sisters taking care of them. Therefore, we need some young sisters to give themselves for this. After their reconsecration and dealing with the Lord, they should say, "Lord, I pick up this burden. I give myself to take care of the junior-high girls. This is my service. I will pick them up, and I will bear them all the way to the New Jerusalem." If some teenagers will do this, they will have the Lord's presence with them, and they will see the blessing. We cannot tell how far the Lord will go with these young ones. Perhaps by this kind of service they will become useful in the Lord's recovery in the coming years. They will be not only "big sisters" but mothers of many young ones"—*The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church*, chapter 1.
- D. We need to be vitalized by the Lord and then go to vitalize others:
  - 1. Fellowship with your companion through desperate prayers for the Lord's blessing.
  - 2. Review all your acquaintances—relatives, neighbors, friends, schoolmates, and colleagues—and make a list of them.
  - 3. Pray over the name list and seek the Lord's leading concerning who should be the first for you to take care of.
  - 4. Keep yourself open to the Lord for His leading to visit people other than your acquaintances.
  - 5. The way to visit, contact, and gain gospel candidates:
    - a. To visit them by appointment continuously.
    - b. To invite them to your home for dinner regularly.
    - c. To write to them periodically concerning their salvation.
    - d. To mail them gospel tracts and spiritual booklets all the time.
    - e. To pray concerning the spiritual welfare of certain definite ones for your whole life.
    - f. Whatever way you take, you should do it persistently with patience and endurance and not expecting to have a quick reaping.
    - g. Learn how to use biblical verses and tracts.
  - 6. Every week we should set apart one day in which we contact others.
  - 7. It is not that we are short of ways; it is that we are short of heart; our success depends not on our knowledge, way, or skill but on our heart.
- IV. "No shepherding can be prevailing if we do not have a love for people, an interest in them, a burden for them, and adequate prayer. Love, interest, burden, and prayer are the essential, basic elements of proper shepherding. Most of us were born with no interest in people. We do not like people, and we do not wish to be bothered by them, invited by them, or visited by them....If we would practice all these things [love, interest, burden, and prayer], the church will grow in a proper way and be built up under the hands of all the saints, not only the elders or those with a special ministry"—The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church, chapter 9.

# **SCRIPTURE READING:**

# 1 Corinthians 4:15

For though you have ten thousand guides in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

# Galatians 4:19

My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you,

#### Colossians 1:28-29

- 28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
- 29 For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.

## 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

- 7 But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children.
- 8 Yearning in this way over you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us.
- 9 For you remember, brothers, our labor and travail: While working night and day so as not to be burdensome to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
- 10 You are witnesses, as well as God, how in a holy and righteous and blameless manner we conducted ourselves toward you who believe,
- 11 Just as you know how we were to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling you and testifying,
- 12 So that you might walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

# 1 John 5:16

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he should make request concerning that.

Notes	